

'After which his thoughts were bent upon retiring again to his own private studies, and falling upon such subjects as his proper genius prompted him to write of, among which was the history of our own nation from the beginning till the Norman Conquest, wherein he had made some progress. When (for this his last treatise, reviving the fame of some other things he had formerly published) being more and more taken notice of for the excellency of his stile, and depth of judgement, he was courted into the service of this new Commonwealth, and at last prevail'd with (for he never hunted after preferment, nor affected the tintimar and hurry of publick business) to take upon him the office of Latin secretary to the Counsel of State.'¹

According to this statement, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* was written subsequent to the execution of Charles I and the proclamation of the Republic. The book was published, it is true, exactly a fortnight after the king's death, and a week after the official setting-up of the republican form of government, but Philips is in error as to the date of composition. Milton himself, in an autobiographical passage in the *Second Defence*, distinctly states that he wrote this pamphlet when the House of Commons was arranging for the trial of the king: 'On the last species of civil liberty, I said nothing, because I saw that sufficient attention was paid to it by the magistrates; nor did I write anything on the prerogative of the crown, till the king, voted an enemy by the parliament, and vanquished in the field, was summoned before the tribunal which condemned him to lose his head. But when at length, some Presbyterian ministers, who had formerly been the most bitter enemies to Charles, be-

¹ Godwin, *Lives of Edw. and John Philips*, app. p. 371.